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Letter dated 23 June 2004 from the Permanent Representative of Ireland to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to draw your attention to the statement on the closure of the Tribune newspaper, Zimbabwe, issued on 23 June 2004 by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union (see annex).

I should be grateful if the text of the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Richard **Ryan**
Permanent Representative of Ireland to the United Nations

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Annex to the letter dated 23 June 2004 from the Permanent Representative of Ireland to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: English, French and Spanish]

Statement on the closure of the Tribune newspaper, Zimbabwe, issued on 23 June 2004 by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union

The European Union condemns the closure of the Tribune newspaper by the Media and Information Commission of Zimbabwe. The European Union reiterates its call upon the Government of Zimbabwe to suspend the implementation of the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act, under which the Media and Information Commission took this action, so as to ensure full freedom of expression and the removal of unnecessary restrictions on accreditation.

The European Union views this action as a further attack on freedom of expression and democratic space in Zimbabwe. This is of particular importance in the context of approaching elections — free press being a necessary prerequisite of a democratic society.

The European Union calls upon the Government of Zimbabwe to respect the freedom of the media and to desist from using repressive legislation, such as the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act, to silence critical voices.

The candidate countries Bulgaria, Croatia, Romania and Turkey, the countries of the stabilization and association process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Serbia and Montenegro, and the European Free Trade Association countries Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, members of the European Economic Area, align themselves with the present statement.